

STAGE TIMES

The Magazine of North Humberside Motor Club Ltd

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2022



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Please do not telephone directors, officials or committee members after 9pm except by prior arrangement.



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Editorial

Welcome to the summer edition of Stage Times. As I write we have had a long period of the hottest weather I can remember and yes I can remember 1976 (I was six).

Motorsport is all about cars and people so you never know who (or what) you're going to run into. This was very true at the recent Caves Classic where Mark Tabor ran into TV star and veteran of many Isle of Mann TT races – Guy Martin. A picture of the occasion is on the front cover.

Elsewhere in the magazine there is an account (by Keith Stewart from York) of the 2022 Banger Challenge won by NHMC's Ken Sturdy. There are three accounts from competitors on the club's John Overend Memorial Rally and the results are published.



<https://northhumbersidemotorclub.co.uk/>

I've had one person contact me with an interest in the DiRT rally championship I've offered to run. As we'd need more numbers to make a championship worthwhile I'll be adding him to the existing international championship I run and will publish results if anything of note happens. Anyone else who is interested, please contact me: NHMC@stage-rally.com

As you will no doubt be aware by now I am a Manta-man having started competing on Navigational Scatters in 1988 with a Vauxhall Cavalier that shared its platform and powertrain with the Manta. I competed on my first road rally in that car in 1989 but in 1990 I was on my way to an autotest when I took a short cut through a tunnel under Leeds University. There was a massive yump in the middle of it and I took off, landed heavily and bent the front of the car and the sump. I re-shelled the Cavalier into an Ascona which in 1991 I started converting for stage rallies having bought another Manta for the road. The Ascona and I did our first two stage rallies at Three Sisters (Wigan) in 1992.

The Manta 400 celebrates its 40th anniversary this year and in celebration I have acquired a 400 kit for my current rally car. Previously my service crew have banned me from having wide arches on account of the fact that I have been known to have little consideration for stage furniture. However as tyres have got bigger my front wheels are catching on the standard wheel arches beyond the point where I can trim the wings any more so it feels like time.

Naturally over the years I have picked up a lot of information and articles about Mantas so.....

Tailpipe this month takes the format of an article from a 1983 Motoring News about a little known 4x4 version of the Manta developed by Tony Fall's team.

I'll keep including bits & pieces I think are interesting because that's what I think a magazine editor does. If you want to hear less about Mantas, please send me your contributions for the magazine as then I won't have room for inclusions from my archive.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and I hope you meet some interesting people!



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2022 Banger Challenge by Keith Stewart

Having taken a £200 Morris Marina to the Le Mans 24 hours 20 years ago for a bet, I had been itching to do something similar. When Covid hit, I set up the Virtual Car Club WhatsApp group where a group of likeminded enthusiasts could share photos, articles and stories of their, and other, cars and bikes. 2 years later it is still going and has daily postings. Earlier this year I asked if any of them were interested in a Banger Challenge where you had to buy a pre-1980 car for less than £3000, drive it 1000 miles in 4 consecutive days and sell it again, all between 1st April and 31st May. In the end, 3 of us decided to do it and we agreed on a rules and points system and subsequently agreed we would set up a GoFundMe page to raise money for the Ukraine relief effort.

Ken Sturdy started off on 21st April having bought quite a nice looking 1967 Austin 1100, although he hadn't driven it further than the Indian takeaway before he and his friend Mike left on their journey, a loop of the South of England. Luckily Mike is an accomplished mechanic and is one of a team that looks after Ken's classic and modern rally cars. This was a good thing as the 1100 never let a couple of hours go by without breaking down, be it the fuel filter needed replacing, the fuel tank started leaking or the alternator packed up. When Ken finished he said he never wanted to drive this thing again!. However, it sold easily and for slightly more than he gave for it. The buyer, a lovely guy who made a donation to the cause, got back in touch after a couple of

weeks to say he had gone through the car and wondered how Ken had even completed the challenge, there were so many loose nuts and bolts. He christened it Lucy...





I bought my A35 on the first day, sight unseen from Bournemouth, a proper banger. When I told the dealer I was going to drive it back to York and then do 1000 miles in 4 days he said I must be mad. I said it was going to get back to York regardless, even if it was on the back of an RAC Recovery vehicle. In the event, it did the 300 miles with nothing more than a wiper arm coming off in a hailstorm and we set off on 26th April for a planned route through Scotland via Perth, the North Aberdeenshire coast, Inverness, Fort William, Loch Lomond, the borders then through the Lakes and the Dales back home. On our team was Roger, an old school friend and Geoff who is a teammate on many veteran car runs. We took a load of spares and a full tool kit and never opened either.

My problem was selling it. I advertised it on eBay with no reserve which meant it had a winning bid, then the guy messed me around so much that after a month I gave him an ultimatum, pick it up or I'm keeping your deposit. I haven't heard from him since. All this meant I was now disqualified as, despite gathering the most points, I had missed the sale



deadline. I re-advertised it and at the same time parked it on the side of the road with For Sale signs on it. A guy rang me up and was so keen to buy it, he refused a test drive. Once he paid and we'd done the paperwork I asked if he'd ever driven an old car - he hadn't. So I accompanied him on a test drive round York and he quickly realised it's very different from a modern car and I let him back out of the sale, albeit with a small penalty. 3rd time lucky, a classic car enthusiast who was used to an old car's idiosyncrasies saw it and bought it from the roadside - but not before I had a parking ticket.

Peter McTague bought his 1972 Triumph 1500 which, again, was a tidy car and he and Gordon, his friend of 60 years did a different Scottish route the week after us. The car behaved well until it shed a fan belt in Inverness. Pete hadn't taken spares and his son scoured the internet trying to find a suitable replacement in Inverness and succeeded, so they were able to complete the challenge. Unfortunately Pete lost a few quid on selling the Triumph, due to the buyer messing him about (said he was in Spain like my guy, I wondered if they were the same person). He eventually sold it to a friend but his financial losses are, today, slightly better. The insurance company who, after overcharging him, refunded the whole premium as a goodwill gesture. Pete cancelled the cover after selling the car and the insurers refunded the premium again! However, Pete was also out of time so the winner of the inaugural Banger Challenge isKen! A dinner is planned and a suitable award will be handed over - it will be shabby, of course.

We would like to run the Banger Challenge next year for like minded enthusiasts to raise money for another charity. The formula worked well on the first outing, we raised over £8000 and it was great fun. Anyone interested in Banger Challenge 23 please get in touch.
pkeithstewart@gmail.com





A date for your diaries Rally Yorkshire 24th September we are running Staindale

SUTTON ON DERWENT (SOD) CLASSIC SCENIC RUN 21ST AUGUST 2022

I have started planning this year's route. I have decided to move the start back to Hutton Cranswick, but not the Farm Shop as before but the village's Sports and Recreation Club. The event as usual will finish at Sutton on Derwent. So put the date in your diaries (if you still have one).

Hopefully the spitfire will be back, but we haven't heard anything yet.

Details on the club website when I get back from my holidays








New classic run

We have a new event planned for the 2nd of October, a classic scenic Tour of Holderness. John Dixon is

doing the route, details nearer the time.



John Overend Memorial Rally 2022

Pos	No.	Driver/Co-Driver	Class	Vehicle	Total	Overall Pos
Overall Awards						
1	2	Darrell Taylor/Dylan Thomas	6	 Ford Fiesta R5 Mk2	0:50:46	1
2	3	David Longfellow/Ian Clapham	6	 Mitsubishi Evo9	0:52:05	2
3	4	Craig Renshaw/Steven Renshaw	6	 Subaru Impreza	0:52:07	3
Class 2						
1	39	Bruce Lindsay/Ella Tyson	2	 Ford Fiesta S1400	0:59:26	11
Class 4						
1	14	Michael Pickles/James Crosland	4	 Peugeot 205	0:55:59	4
Class 6						
1	9	Matthew Sample/Rachel Sample	6	 Mitsubishi Lancer/Colt	0:58:04	9
1st North Humberside MC Crew - John Overend Memorial Trophy						
1	25	Robert Overend/Rebecca Overend	2	 Ford Fiesta Mk6	1:09:41	21



Competitors' Views

Danny Cosgrove/Rob Brook car 33

Having been involved in motorsport from an early age, usually helping with servicing on event with C S Motorsport Developments for other drivers it was inevitable that one day I would have a go myself.

In 2020, I bought a fiesta, the car had been a rally school car, so was already caged and the basics were there if a little rough around the edges, a project started to tidy the car up with the assistance of Adrian Day at C S Motorsport Developments. We planned to give the car a full check over, repair anything that needed doing and update the seats, harnesses and extinguishers, Rob Brook at Clubman Motorsport was extremely helpful supplying everything I needed. Covid hit and took the pressure off the build and delayed my BARS test too.

Jump forward to 2022 and with licence in hand the entry was put in for the John Overend memorial at Melbourne, fully supported by CS Motorsport developments, Rob Brook as my navigator, what could go wrong?

Scrutineering passed the car, service area set up and we were ready for the event, having been to Melbourne many times I was very familiar with the format but nothing prepares you for your first competitive rally. Will I be quick enough? Will the car finish the event? And so on.

The time came to go and all the apprehension disappeared, replaced with adrenaline, the count down, the revs building and clutch dumped, we were off, instruction of where to go flowing from Rob and learning the car, understeer, late braking but within a lap of the stage things began to flow a bit better, more control, things were falling into place.



The day went on, stage after stage finished, good concise instruction from Rob Brook, the car being checked and minor niggles repaired in service by Adrian Day of CS motorsport, this ensured we remained on track and as reliable as we could be.

To sum up my first competitive rally on the John Overend memorial, it was brilliant, we finished 15th overall with the car one piece but would not have been possible without the expertise of Northhumberside MC members for organising and running a slick event, or the people who supported me, before the event, getting to the event, on event and after the event. In particular, Adrian Day, CS Motorsport Developments for car prep and on event servicing. Rob Brook, navigator, all parts required and coaching whilst on event.

David Longfellow/Ian Clapham – Car 3

34 crews in the main rally & 7 in the junior section started the event on Sunday 19th June at Melbourne Airfield which was a round of the ANWCC Stage Rally Championship, The Melbourne Challenge and the F1000 Junior & Senior Championships.

Myself & driver David Longfellow were seeded car 3 in a Mitsubishi Evo IV & were looking forward to the event after a good run on the Clacton & Tendring rally earlier in the year, the rally consisted of 6 stages in 3 loops with each stage run twice & totalled some 45 miles on a mix of 70% solid & 30% broken concrete.

Each stage had 1 split & 1 merge so pretty straightforward & a number of big bale chicanes & LOTS of cones & tyres.

The juniors completed each loop of 2 stages back to back & ran ahead of the man field.

Stage 1 we finished second fastest behind the rapid Fiesta F5 Mk2 of Darrel Taylor & Dylan Thomas with Craig & Stephen Renshaw in a lovely Subaru Impreza just 2 seconds adrift in third, unfortunately we passed car 1 Ford Escort Mk2 of Darrel Nugent & Helen Hall with a failed differential.



Stage 2 was the same layout as the previous & we were 15 seconds quicker



however we had a misfire & during the stage we were sure it was fuel starvation, Craig & Stephen took 4 seconds out of us on this one.

The marshals moved some cones around for the next pair of stages but it was 90% the same route, unfortunately on stage 3 after topping the tank up the misfire was still there & worse towards the end of the stage, but thankfully still ahead of the Subaru pair, the R5 extending their lead stage by stage, there will be no catching the fiesta! The guys in service decided to disconnect the flatshift to see if that cured the problem.

Stage 4 once again quicker than the previous, 11 seconds this time with no misfire! but Craig & Stephen again were 4 seconds quicker! We need to up our game to keep hold of 2nd overall.

A long break now while the stages were changed again to keep us on our toes.

Stage 5 was our best by far, only 4 seconds behind the R5 & crucially 3 seconds ahead of the rapid Subaru crew.

Stage 6 & the final stage of the day 7 seconds quicker than the previous but had we done enough to keep hold of second? Craig & Stephen took just 2 seconds from us but that was not enough for them to overtake us overall & we finished in second by just 2 seconds after nearly 1 hour of rallying! The R5 pairing were a massive 1 minute 19 seconds clear to take the win.

A great day had by all, thanks to JL Brooks, Lanes Group, H₂O Flowtech & Powers UK.



Car 20 - Willie Pollock/John Marshall.

First trip to the John Overend Memorial Rally for Willie Pollock and John Marshall in the Pollock Transport Mk2 Escort.

Only the third outing for this newly built Escort so the stage miles and variable track conditions would be a real test for the car.

Stages 1 & 2 were tackled fairly steadily and without any real issues although grip was a problem in the area in and around the pylon and got our attention. We did however manage to shave 29 secs off our first run when we tackled Stage 2 so we were definitely finding our feet.

Half way through Stage 4 we had a fuel light warning so we nursed the car to the finish line to be informed by a Marshal that fuel was visibly leaking from the car onto the ground!! Everything switched off and a tow to service breathing a huge sigh of relief that we had clearly avoided the real potential for a fire in the engine compartment.















The "Spirit of Rallying" then kicked in. Pat Pattison, who is an old friend through our association with Gav Heseltine, was servicing for Robert Overend and kindly helped us locate the problem which was a faulty clip on the injection rail. A quick strip down of the rail and re-assembly with the help of some cable ties got us up and running again and two very rapid runs through stages 5&6.

Finished 5th overall and first in Class 5 so a happy day at the office.








Great event which was very professionally organised and run and we will definitely be back.










Final Results

Pos	No.	Driver/Co-driver	Class	Class Posn.	Vehicle	Total Time	Diff. Leader
1	2	Darrell Taylor/Dylan Thomas	6	1	Ford Fiesta R5 Mk2	0:50:46	
2	3	David Longfellow/Ian Clapham	6	2	 Mitsubishi Evo9	0:52:05	1:19
3	4	Craig Renshaw/Steven Renshaw	6	3	 Subaru Impreza	0:52:07	1:21
4	14	Michael Pickles/James Crosland	4	1	 Peugeot 205	0:55:59	5:13
5	20	William Pollock/John Marshall	5	1	 Ford Escort	0:56:13	5:27
6	15	Kevin Franks/Craig Walley	4	2	 Ford Escort	0:56:21	5:35
7	17	Nick Taylor/Ross Hammond	4	3	 Peugeot 205 GTI	0:56:29	5:43
8	10	Rob Watson/Josh Watson	4	4	 Ford Escort	0:56:30	5:44
9	9	Matthew Sample/Rachel Sample	6	4	 Mitsubishi Lancer/Colt	0:58:04	7:18
10	21	William Mellard/Kieran Bourne	6	5	 Subaru Impreza	0:58:23	7:37
11	39	Bruce Lindsay/Ella Tyson	2	1	 Ford Fiesta S1400	0:59:26	8:40
12	37	Liam Clark/Ben Wild	3	1	 Ford Fiesta	0:59:49	9:03
13	30	Doug Ramsay/Ewan Bosworth	3	2	 Ford Ka	1:00:30	9:44
14	28	Joe Oade/Steve Oade	2	2	 Nissan Micra	1:02:24	11:38
15	33	Daniel Cosgrove/Rob Brook	4	5	 Ford Fiesta	1:02:38	11:52
16	19	Kevin Lomax/James Haigh	4	6	 Proton Satria	1:03:30	12:44
17	35	Philip Hewson/Michael Thornton	4	7	 Renault Clio	1:04:47	14:01
18	18	Harry Walshaw/Russell Thompson	3	3	 Vauxhall Corsa	1:05:57	15:11



19	23	Jonathan Turnbull/Neil Rostern	2	3	 Vauxhall Nova	1:05:57	15:11
20	5	Ryan Fagan/Mick O'donnell	5	2	 Ford Escort	1:06:24	15:38
21	25	Robert Overend/Rebecca Overend	2	4	 Ford Fiesta Mk6	1:09:41	18:55
22	29	Rob Barnett/Andy Napier	1	1	 Citroën C1	1:10:37	19:51
23	36	Tom Barnett/Sophie Landen	1	2	 Nissan Micra	1:12:25	21:39
24	32	Hugh Robinson/Paul Topping	1	3	 Nissan Micra	1:17:15	26:29
25	13	Nigel Keen/Edward Keen	4	8	 Ford Escort Mk2 RS	1:19:23	28:37
26	34	Robert Wiggins/Emma Cooper	4	9	 Peugeot 205 GTI	1:46:10	55:24

Final Retirements

No.	Driver/Co-driver	Class	Vehicle	Location	Reason
1	Darren Nugent/Helen Hall	5	Ford Escort	Stage 1	Diff
6	Dave Hornbrook/Ann Forster	6	 Mitsubishi Evo 7	Stage 1	Blown engine
11	Mark Blenkinsop/Adam Blenkinsop	6	 Mitsubishi Evo IV	Stage 2	Retired
24	Chris Greenall/James Greenall	2	 Vauxhall Nova	Stage 5	Hole in top of gearbox
26	Lorraine Leeming/Karen Fitz-Simons	4	 Ford Escort	Stage 1	Blown Engine
27	Paul Wild/David Thompson	5	 BMW Mini Cooper S	ATC5	Mechanical
31	Jake Wilson/Kyle Wilson	3	 Citroën C2	Stage 1	Clutch
38	Harry Raylor/Kieran Ledger	4	 Ford Fiesta	ATC3	Gearbox



Marshals News

Thanks for everyone who has turned out so far this year, especially on the John Overend , greatly appreciated.

Marshals Wanted

Sunday 28th August Sheffield and Hallamshire

Rainworth Skoda Stages (and Junior Rally) on Leconfield, still short of in stage marshals

Rally Yorkshire Saturday 24th September we are running Staindale

1st Car is due at 11.00am

So I guess signing on is going to be around 9.00am to 9.30am latest.

Last car due at 13.30

Desperately short of marshals

Lindholme Motor Sports Club Vale of York Stages - 11th September

The third event of the year on Melbourne , they have a full entry so should be a good day.

Malton Forest Rally – Sunday 6th November 2022

No details yet but we usually help on Gale Rigg.

A recruitment poster for Top Gear. It features the Top Gear logo at the top. The text reads: "TopGear is looking for 16 - 20 year olds with an amateur passion for the high-octane world of motorsport to take part in a once in a lifetime adventure." Below this are two bullet points: "Are you a karting, banger-racing or track-day talent?" and "Or a mechanic with skills under the bonnet?". It then says "If so, but you've never been given a break, we want to hear from you!". At the bottom, it provides the email address "TOPGEARMOTORSPORT@BBC.CO.UK" and asks applicants to include their name, age, and best contact number. On the right side of the poster is a person in a white racing suit and helmet with arms crossed.

TopGear is looking for 16 - 20 year olds with an amateur passion for the high-octane world of motorsport to take part in a once in a lifetime adventure.

- Are you a karting, banger-racing or track-day talent?
- Or a mechanic with skills under the bonnet?

If so, but you've never been given a break, we want to hear from you!

TO APPLY EMAIL:
TOPGEARMOTORSPORT@BBC.CO.UK
PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR NAME, AGE AND BEST CONTACT NUMBER.



Marshals Championship

Please see updated results in this magazine, please let me know if any errors.

John Newlove

Chief Marshal

John.newlove@btinternet.com

	NHMC Marshals Championship 2022											Total
	Riponian	East Riding Stages	Autotest March	York Classic	Look out	DST Leconfield Stages	White Rose Classic	John Overend	Cadwell	Malton FR	Other Events	Total
Mike Kitching	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				8
John Milner	1	1		1	1		1	1				6
Alan Carvell	1	1		1	1		1	1				6
Richard Hart	1	1		1	1			1				5
Robert Newlove	1	1	1		1	1						5
Gareth Pennell	1	1			1	1		1				5
Nigel Turton				1	1	1		1				4
Dave Cogan	1		1	1				1				4
John Brook		1				1		1				4
Graham Hudson	1	1					1	1				4
Graham Tabor	1	1	1					1				4
Dennis Robinson	1										2	3
Gail Newlove	1		1				1					3
Carl Thompson	1		1					1				3
Kirsty Thompson	1		1					1				3
Trevor Davies	1	1					1					3
David James								1			2	3
Ian Sadofsky	1			1				1				3
Sarah Kitching					1			1				2
Ian James	1							1				2
John Dixon		1						1				2
Chris Newlove					1			1				2
Dave Watkins	1							1				2
Phil Craven	1							1				2
Geoff Craven	1							1				2
Dean Carter	1						1					2
Jane Carter	1						1					2
Robbie Overend	1											1
Rosemary Sadofsky				1								1
Carl Oglesby	1											1
Stuart Carriss	1											1
Mark Tabor	1											1
Dave Shpherd											1	1



2022 NHMC STAGE RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Driver	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL
Ken Sturdy	67 (2)	58 (4)	63(5)	58(6)	68(7)		314
Neil Fewlass	37 (4)	35(7)					72
Robbie Overend	41(8)						41
Bernie Nolan	38(7)						38
Chris Marlow	35 (2)						35
Dan Hart	10 (4)						10

NAVIGATOR	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL
Tom Hutchings	32 (1)	54 (3)	58 (4)	63(6)	68(7)		275
Andrew Funnell	63(5)	58(6)					121
Dave Shepherd	35 (2)	38(7)					73
Steve Varey	37 (4)	35(7)					72
Rob Brook	42(7)						42
Rebecca Overend							

Key to events:

8	JOMR	19/06/2022	SV	Melbourne
7	DST Leconfield Stages Rally	01/05/2022	SV	Leconfield
6	Alan Healy Memorial Rally	03/04/2022	SV	Cadwell
5	Donington Rally	13/03/2022	SV	Donington
4	East Riding Stages Rally	28/02/2022	MV	East Yorkshire
3	Snetterton Stages Rally	19/02/2022	SV-A	Snetterton RC
2	Riponian	06/02/22	Forest	Forest Rally
1	Brands Hatch Stages	15/02/22	SV-A	Brands Hatch

Gail Newlove is working out the points, you need to submit your results via the claim form on the club's website. Gail can be contacted at nhmc.secretary@btinternet.com



MOTERING NEWS, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1983

4-WD OPEL MANTA 400

Opel's flavoured 'Quattro'

On his trip to Sweden to cover this year's Swedish Rally, S.F. was the only Brit present when Opel Sweden showed off the latest Russelsheim toy — the futuristic four-wheel drive Opel Manta 400.

AS the Rothmans-liveried Manta 400 was hoisted onto its side, we got the impression Tony Fall would have happily wrung their necks. They were the supremos of Opel Team Sweden, who had the idea of presenting Opel's latest development machine to the Swedish press — all allegedly without Tony Fall's knowledge. With the Rothmans Opel Team boss away enjoying the sunshine in the Gulf for the Kuwait Rally, his team driver Ari Vatanen was on hand to chauffeur members of the press around a snow covered field; to experience four-wheel drive, Opel style.

After a presentation ceremony of the Swedish team's drivers, all eyes turned to the ordinary looking Manta sitting amongst the other team cars in the showroom of Autoservices of Karlstad, the Opel main dealer. Hardly a second glance would ordinarily be cast its way. Except for the inscription '4WD' on its doors, it was indistinguishable from other Manta 400s seen lying around.

The order was given and a dozen pairs of hands reached down and lifted the machine onto its side to reveal a somewhat different underneath to the ordinary Manta 400. When petrol started to run out over the showroom floor the intrepid Swedes decided that maybe it would be better to tip it the other way.

With that minor stumbling block overcome and the initial rush of photographers ebbing away, the Manta revealed all to an expectant gathering. With the Opel engineer Karl-Heinz Goldstein on hand to answer technical queries a barrage of questions was fired.

The car was basically a rally version of the Manta 400 fitted with a Phase 2 motor producing 255 bhp, with the heart of a four-wheel drive system fitted after the car's normal Getrag gearbox. The heart looked surprisingly familiar and was confirmed as a Ferguson Formula system fitted by the Coventry firm and identical to that available as a road car conversion to the Opel Monza / Vauxhall Royale.

It consists of a transfer box mounted on the output end of the car's Getrag 'box. From there the power is transmitted through a viscous coupling system to both front and rear differentials. The

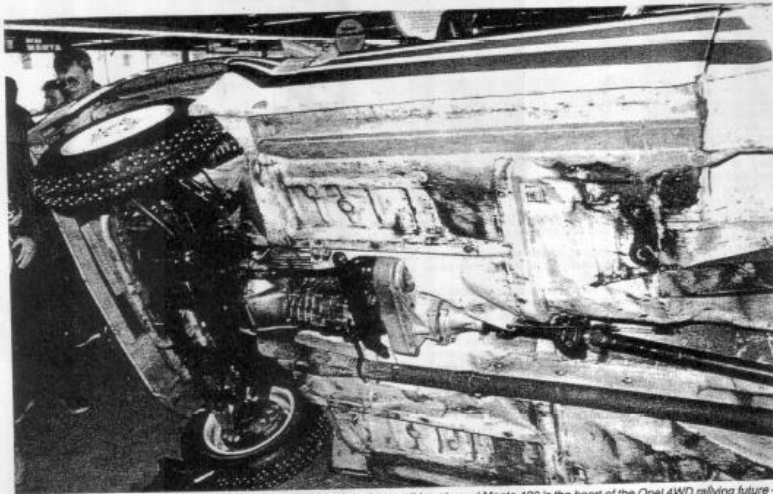
rear differential and axle are standard' Manta 400 rally components, whilst the front end axle and gears are from Ferguson.

The car's suspension remains unchanged front and rear, retaining a solid rear axle mounting. We asked Goldstein why Opel had decided not to follow Audi with an independent rear suspension set-up. "In development", he replied, "we found that the normal solid axle was ideal. I think some of the Audi Quattro handling problems are caused by the independent rear suspension". Certainly the Audi is somewhat delicate at the rear, tending to be re-tracked frequently using the famous ball of string.

Front suspension is unchanged except for a redesigned hub assembly to accommodate the front drive shafts. Power loss according to Goldstein was similar to the Audi Quattro at about 20%, but just how you fit a four-wheel drive car on to a rolling road is still a little beyond the grasp of this particular scribe.

Anyway, enough of the theory, what about the practice? So, it was back to the cars for a short drive to some Army property for a proper taste of Opel 4WD. Ari Vatanen took to the wheel first and claimed it was the first time he had driven a proper four-wheel drive car apart from a brief sampling of Audi's road car Quattro. Although someone close to Ari did remark that we shouldn't examine the rear of the car too closely or we may come across a dent. If we did find a 'hypothetical' dent it may have been put there by a Finn during practice the day before — personally we didn't believe a word of it!

After a couple of quick trips up



SPOT the difference? Mounted just behind the normal Getrag gearbox on this upturned Manta 400 is the heart of the Opel 4WD rallying future — a Ferguson Formula transfer box. Both front and rear suspension remains intact and doesn't differ from the normal rally Ascona / Manta set up.

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and down the snow and ice covered tracks. Vatanen returned and after nearly spinning it the odd couple of times remarked: "It definitely doesn't understeer as much as the Audi and it will spin! It feels very manoeuvrable and you can set it up sideways under braking, which is good. It has the feeling of a rear drive car, but if you use left foot braking, it slides sideways just like front drive."

Two more runs and S.F. managed to fight off the Swedish press and steal a ride in the machine. By that time the clutch was beginning to feel the strain of four-wheel drive tractability but not enough to spoil the thrill. Away from the line the



READY to sample Opel 4WD, S.F. climbs into the hot-seat alongside Bjorn Johansson — the man who settled into driving the car suspiciously quickly.

acceleration was mindblowing, far outreaching the expected traction of four-wheel drive. There was no evident wheel spin, this Manta just sat down and went. Through second, third and fourth gear the electrifying sensation continued. A quick dab on the brake pedal set the machine up sideways on a straight piece of track, but it was not accompanied by the familiar retardation associated with rear wheel drive.

A hairpin approached and again the car was set up under braking and simply slid round with ease and under light throttle, not at all like the comparative boredom of an Audi Quattro under similar conditions. Power increased and the Manta again shot off like a bullet. An imaginary 90° right-left was mastered with ease. The car gave a dual sensation of sliding sideways, yet being pulled along as well. Basing the feeling on just rear wheel drive and relating the sideways angle of the car to a projected exit line from a corner, this Manta totally fooled the senses, always ending up at least 2m from the expected position. In a rear drive car it could best be described as throwing the car sideways, then part way through a corner finding the rear wheels grip, suddenly thrusting you forward into the inside ditch!

Vatanen later commented: "It's a good base for further development and it did not feel as bad as I thought it might. Of course it accelerates away 100% better than my Ascona, that's the four-wheel drive and with more power the car would feel better. But I was surprised with its handling — it's good, really."

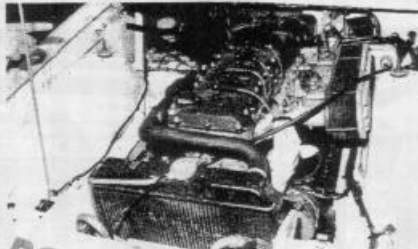
Following Vatanen in the driving seat was the slightly built Swede, Bjorn Johansson. He had been driving the car the day

before, and it showed. He jumped in and needed no settling down time at all. He would fling the Manta into make believe corners, constantly keeping the power on and there was no hint of understeer at all. This four-wheel drive car looked completely the opposite to the Audi Quattro and if not for the traction away from the line, one could have been forgiven for thinking the front drive had been disconnected for this 'show' session.

Johansson summed it up abruptly: "I think this four-wheel drive is dangerous — all the time you have to keep the throttle on,

would be issued. Then there would be the difficulty in persuading the already hardened GM powers-that-be in the 'States to give the go ahead for such a far reaching project, not to mention the cost to the buyer of 200 road going Mantas, as it would not be possible to homologate a four-wheel drive evolution of the present Manta 400.

No, this was something of a publicity stunt — which worked, viz this feature! Tony Fall has enough on his plate at the moment, what with Manta 400 homologation, without the added hassle of four-wheel drive, but



OLD FAITHFUL, the diesel engine blocked 2.4-litre Phase Two rally mill. The 255 bhp produced was well able to cope with 4WD.

even in corners where you would normally lift, or it understeers too much.

As Vatanen says, now Opel has a base from which to develop a practical four-wheel drive rally car. But the reality of such a car ever appearing? Opel has had a dogged time with homologating the Manta 400 in two-wheel drive form. At the time of writing it was still not certain when GpB papers

when the Manta is homologated and has won a World Championship Rally, it would be interesting to find how the GM management would view the results of a comparative test between the Manta 400 and the Manta 400 4WD. Without a doubt, in terms of loose surface rallying, four-wheel drive must win.

S.F.

